

## **From Data Tool to Data Narrative: Communicating Outreach Impact Through Story Mapping**

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### **1. Background**

A recent focus of Community Outreach and Engagement (COE) offices is to develop data tools to capture outreach and demonstrate the impact of outreach programs. This abstract presents how our Community Outreach, Engagement & Equity (COEE) office used data from our new Outreach Management System (OMS) to create a story map highlighting outreach activities in 2024. A story map is an interactive visual narrative that blends maps, text, images, and multimedia to engage users and guide them through geographically guided thematic stories. Applied to COE, a story map can emotionally connect the audience to the geographic reach and impact of outreach initiatives. Crafting a data story involves three main parts: exploratory storyframing, imaginative storyforming, and immersive storytelling. We'll show our process of using outreach data in the storyframing, storyforming, and storytelling of our 2024 outreach impact.

### **2. Goals**

Through our example, users will be able to identify the essential steps for creating a story map using outreach data. Our primary goals are to demonstrate an impactful method of communicating impact that leverages geospatial, demographic, and multimedia elements, while also delineating the specific OMS data required to create an effective story map.

### **3. Solutions and Methods**

Storyframing began by fostering outreach team buy-in by asking outreach team members which event they wanted to highlight, and what they hoped community members would gain from the product. We then inventoried all 2024 outreach activities captured in our OMS, including demographics of event attendees and characteristics of community partners who requested the events. Storyforming involved outlining the narrative we aimed to convey, using feedback from the outreach team and integrating elements important for showing COE impact, such as explaining the catchment area and priority populations. Storytelling is the final product, culminating in a web-based interactive experience that shows our outreach impact for 2024.

### **4. Outcomes**

The outcome is a comprehensive story map that explains who COEE is, what we do, events engaged in highlighting activities with our priority populations, and that demonstrates our growth since 2023. We engaged our outreach team to provide feedback on the content of the story and used their voice to inform its narrative. Unlike dashboards, which offer real-time, interactive data visualizations for exploring key metrics, a story map presents data within a narrative framework, guiding viewers through spatial and thematic information in a cohesive and structured sequence.

### **5. Lessons Learned and Future Directions**

Spatial outreach data was crucial for developing the story map. The structure of our OMS facilitated the process by consolidating the spatial information in one place. Future directions include user experience feedback from the community to enhance the story map's effectiveness.